

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE:
A LECTURE FOR THE ARTS
AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION
SOCIETY  BY WILLIAM
MORRIS.

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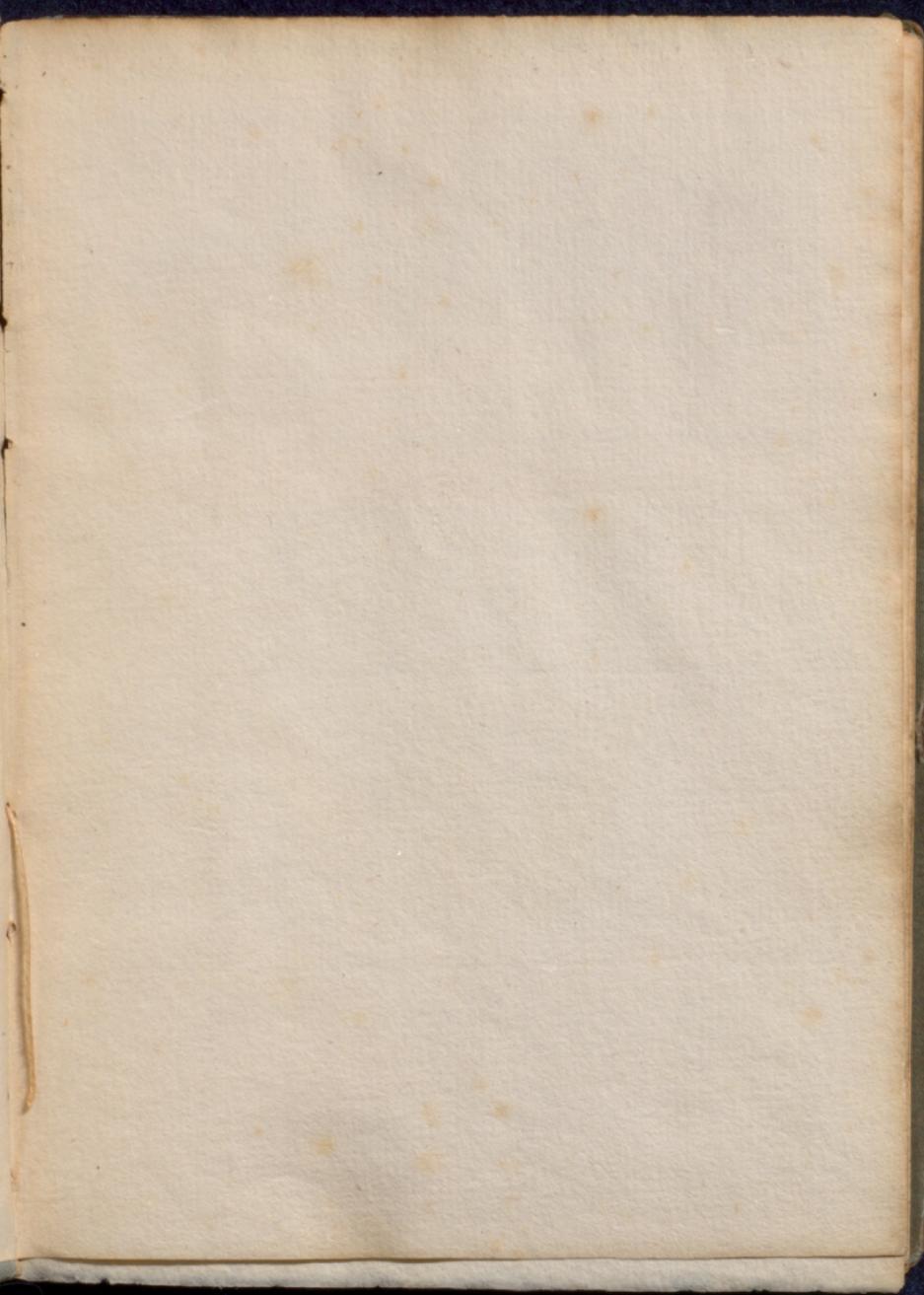
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GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE:
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SOCIETY  BY WILLIAM
MORRIS.

COLLECTOR OF
ALLEGORIES AND
ADDITIONS TO THE
SOCIAL WORK OF
HOBES

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GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE.



Y the word Architecture is, I suppose, commonly understood the art of ornamental building, and in this sense I shall often have to use it here. Yet I would not like you to think of its productions merely as well constructed and well-proportioned buildings, each one of which is handed over by the architect to other artists to finish, after his designs have been carried out (as we say) by a number of mechanical workers, who are not artists. A true architectural work rather is a building duly provided with all necessary furni-

a

**Architec-
ture a
co-opera-
tive Art**

ture, decorated with all due ornament, according to the use, quality, and dignity of the building, from mere mouldings or abstract lines, to the great epical works of sculpture and painting, which, except as decorations of the nobler form of such buildings, cannot be produced at all. So looked on, a work of architecture is a harmonious co-operative work of art, inclusive of all the serious arts, all those which are not engaged in the production of mere toys, or of ephemeral prettinesses.



OW these works of art are man's expression of the value of life, and also the production of them

makes his life of value: & since they can only be produced by the general good-will and help of the public, their continuous production, or the existence of the true Art of Architecture, betokens a society which, whatever elements of change it may bear within it, may be called stable, since it is founded on the happy exercise of the energies of the most useful part of its population.

No history of the lack of Art

HAT the absence of this Art of Architecture may betoken in the long run it is noteasy for us to say: because that lack belongs only to these later times of the world's history, which as yet we cannot fairly see, because they are too near to

Sense of
the lack
of Art

us; but clearly in the present it indicates a transference of the interest of civilised men from the development of the human & intellectual energies of the race to the development of its mechanical energies. If this tendency is to go along the logical road of development, it must be said that it will destroy the arts of design and all that is analogous to them in literature; but the logical outcome of obvious tendencies is often thwarted by the historical development; that is, by what I can call by no better name than the collective will of mankind; and unless my hopes deceive me, I should say that this process has already begun, that there is a revolt on foot against

Revolt
against
Utilitari-
anism

the utilitarianism which threatens to destroy the Arts; and that it is deeper rooted than a mere passing fashion. For myself I do not indeed believe that this revolt can effect much, so long as the present state of society lasts; but as I am sure that great changes which will bring about a new state of society are rapidly advancing upon us, I think it a matter of much importance that these two revolts should join hands, or at least should learn to understand one another. If the New society when it comes (itself the result of the ceaseless evolution of countless years of tradition) should find the world cut off from all tradition of art, all aspiration towards

Co-operative
Art no
mere
dream

the beauty which man has proved that he can create, much time will be lost in running hither & thither after the new thread of art; many lives will be barren of a manly pleasure which the world can ill afford to lose even for a short time. I ask you, therefore, to accept what follows as a contribution toward the revolt against utilitarianism, toward the attempt at catching up the slender thread of tradition before it be too late.



OW, that Harmonious Architectural unit, inclusive of the arts in general, is no mere dream. I have said that it is only in these later times that it has become extinct:

until the rise of modern society, no Civilisation, no Barbarism has been without it in some form; but it reached its fullest development in the Middle Ages, an epoch really more remote from our modern habits of life and thought than the older civilisations were, though an important part of its life was carried on in our own country by men of our own blood. Nevertheless, remote as those times are from ours, if we are ever to have architecture at all, we must take up the thread of tradition there and nowhere else, because that Gothic Architecture is the most completely organic form of the Art which the world has seen; the break in the thread of tradition

Architec- could only occur there : all the former developments tended thitherward, and to ignore this fact and attempt to catch up the thread before that point was reached, would be a mere piece of artificiality, betokening, not new birth, but a corruption into mere whim of the ancient traditions.

In order to illustrate this position of mine, I must ask you to allow me to run very briefly over the historical sequence of events which led to Gothic Architecture and its fall, and to pardon me for stating familiar & elementary facts which are necessary for my purpose.  I must admit also that in

Archi-
tecture
now re-
present-
ed by in-
complete
works

doing this I must mostly take my illustrations from works that appear on the face of them to belong to the category of ornamental building, rather than that of those complete and inclusive works of which I have spoken. But this incompleteness is only on the surface; to those who study them they appear as belonging to the class of complete architectural works; they are lacking in completeness only through the consequences of the lapse of time and the folly of men, who did not know what they were, who, pretending to use them, marred their real use as works of art; or in a similar spirit abused them by making them serve their turn as instru-

Three
great
Styles

ments to express their passing pas-
sion and spite of the hour.



E may divide the his-
tory of the Art of Archi-
tecture into two periods,
the Ancient & the Me-
diæval: the Ancient again may be
divided into two styles, the barba-
rian (in the Greek sense) and the
classical. We have, then, three great
styles to consider: the Barbarian,
the Classical, and the Mediæval.
The two former, however, were
partly synchronous, & at least over-
lapped somewhat. When the cur-
tain of the stage of definite history
first draws up, we find the small
exclusive circle of the highest civil-
isation, which was dominated by

Hellenic thought & science, fitted
with a very distinctive and orderly
architectural style. That style ap-
pears to us to be, within its limits,
one of extreme refinement, & per-
haps seemed so to those who ori-
ginally practised it. Moreover, it is
ornamented with figure-sculpture
far advanced towards perfection
even at an early period of its exist-
ence, and swiftly growing in tech-
nical excellence; yet for all that, it
is, after all, a part of the general
style of architecture of the Barba-
rian world, & only outgoes it in the
excellence of its figure-sculpture &
its refinement.  The bones of it,
its merely architectural part, are lit-
tle changed from the Barbarian or

Greek
Classical

The Temple

primal building, which is a mere piling or jointing together of material, giving one no sense of growth in the building itself and no sense of the possibility of growth in the style.

The one Greek form of building with which we are really familiar, the columnar temple, though always built with blocks of stone, is clearly a deduction from the wooden god's-house or shrine, which was a necessary part of the equipment of the not very remote ancestors of the Periclean Greeks; nor had this god's-house changed so much as the city had changed from the Tribe, or the Worship of the City (the true religion of the Greeks)

from the Worship of the Ancestors of the Tribe. In fact, rigid conservatism of form is an essential part of Greek architecture as we know it. From this conservatism of form there resulted a jostling between the building and its higher ornament. In early days, indeed, when some healthy barbarism yet clung to the sculpture, the discrepancy is not felt; but as increasing civilisation demands from the sculptors more naturalism and less restraint, it becomes more and more obvious, and more and more painful; till at last it becomes clear that sculpture has ceased to be a part of architecture and has become an extraneous art bound to the building

Civilized Sculpture on Barbarous Architecture

**Greek
Narrow-
ness**

by habit or superstition. The form of the ornamental building of the Greeks, then, was very limited, had no capacity in it for development, & tended to divorce from its higher or epical ornament. What is to be said about the spirit of it which ruled that form?  This I think; that the narrow superstition of the form of the Greek temple was not a matter of accident, but was the due expression of the exclusiveness and aristocratic arrogance of the ancient Greek mind, a natural result of which was a demand for pedantic perfection in all the parts and details of a building; so that the inferior parts of the ornament are so slavishly subordinated to the su-

Perfect-
ion

perior, that no invention or individuality is possible in them, whence comes a kind of barenness & blankness, a rejection in short of all romance, which does not indeed destroy their interest as relics of past history, but which puts the style of them aside as any possible foundation for the style of the future architecture of the world. It must be remembered also that this attempt at absolute perfection soon proved a snare to Greek architecture; for it could not be kept up long. It was easy indeed to ensure the perfect execution of a fret or a dentil; not so easy to ensure the perfection of the higher ornament: so that as Greek energy began to

Roman
Art

fall back from its high-watermark, the demand for absolute perfection became rather a demand for absolute plausibility, which speedily dragged the architectural arts into mere Academicism.

UT long before classical art reached the last depths of that degradation, it had brought to birth another style of architecture, the Roman style, which to start with was differentiated from the Greek by having the habitual use of the arch forced upon it. To my mind, organic Architecture, Architecture which must necessarily grow, dates from the habitual use of the arch, which, taking into con-

The
Arch

sideration its combined utility and beauty, must be pronounced to be the greatest invention of the human race. Until the time when man not only had invented the arch, but had gathered boldness to use it habitually, architecture was necessarily so limited, that strong growth was impossible to it. It was quite natural that a people should crystallize the first convenient form of building they might happen upon, or, like the Greeks, accept a traditional form without aspiration towards anything more complex or interesting. Till the arch came into use, building men were the slaves of conditions of climate, materials, kind of labour available, and so

Real ar-
chitec-
ture be-
gins

forth  But once furnished with the arch, man has conquered Nature in the matter of building; he can defy the rigours of all climates under which men can live with fair comfort: splendid materials are not necessary to him; he can attain a good result from shabby & scrappy materials. When he wants size & span he does not need a horde of war-captured slaves to work for him; the free citizens (if there be any such) can do all that is needed without grinding their lives out before their time. The arch can do all that architecture needs, and in turn from the time when the Arch comes into habitual use, the main artistic business of architecture is the de-

coration of the Arch; the only satisfactory style is that which never ^{Roman} engi-
disguises its office, but adorns and ^{neering} glorifies it. This the Roman architecture, the first style that used the arch, did not do. It used the arch frankly and simply indeed, in one part of its work, but did not adorn it; this part of the Roman building must, however, be called engineering rather than architecture, though its massive & simple dignity is a wonderful contrast to the horrible and restless nightmare of modern engineering. In the other side of its work, the ornamental side, Roman building used the arch and adorned it, but disguised its office, and pretended that the struc-

Roman architec- ture

ture of its buildings was still that of the lintel, and that the arch bore no weight worth speaking of. For the Romans had no ornamental building of their own (perhaps we should say no art of their own) and therefore fitted their ideas of the ideas of the Greek sculpture-architect on to their own massive building; and as the Greek plastered his energetic & capable civilised sculpture on to the magnified shrine of his forefathers, so the Roman plastered sculpture, shrine, and all, on to his magnificent engineer's work. In fact, this kind of front-building or veneering was the main resource of Roman ornament; the construction and ornament did not

interpenetrate; & to us at this date it seems doubtful if he gained by hiding with marble veneer the solid and beautiful construction of his wall of brick or concrete; since others have used marble far better than he did, but none have built a wall or turned an arch better. As to the Roman ornament, it is not in itself worth much sacrifice of interest in the construction: the Greek ornament was cruelly limited & conventional; but everything about it was in its place, & there was a reason for everything, even though that reason were founded on superstition. But the Roman ornament has no more freedom than the Greek, while it has lost the logic of the lat-

Roman
ornament

Execution
versus
design

ter: it is rich and handsome, & that is all the reason it can give for its existence; nor does its execution and its design interpenetrate. One cannot conceive of the Greek ornament existing apart from the precision of its execution; but well as the Roman ornament is executed in all important works, one almost wishes it were less well executed, so that some mystery might be added to its florid handsomeness  Once again, it is a piece of necessary history, and to criticize it from the point of view of work of to-day would be like finding fault with a geological epoch: and who can help feeling touched by its remnants which show crumbling

The
Roman
Style in-
organic

& battered amidst the incongruous mass of modern houses, amidst the disorder, vulgarity and squalor of some modern town? If I have ventured to call your attention to what it was as architecture, it is because of the abuse of it which took place in later times & has even lasted into our own anti-architectural days; & because it is necessary to point out that it has not got the qualities essential to making it a foundation for any possible new birth of the arts. In its own time it was for centuries the only thing that redeemed the academical period of classical art from mere nothingness, and though it may almost be said to have perished before the change

The first
of the
change

came, yet in perishing it gave some token of the coming change, which indeed was as slow as the decay of imperial Rome herself. It was in the height of the taxgathering period of the Roman Peace, in the last days of Diocletian (died 313) in the palace of Spalato which he built himself to rest in after he was satiated with rule, that the rebel, Change first showed in Roman art, and that the builders admitted that their false lintel was false, and that the arch could do without it.

 HIS was the first obscure beginning of Gothic or organic Architecture; hence forth till the beginning of the modern epoch all is growth un-

The
birth of
Gothic

interrupted, however slow. Indeed, it is slow enough at first: Organic Architecture took two centuries to free itself from the fetters which the Academical ages had cast over it, & the Peace of Rome had vanished before it was free. But the full change came at last, & the architecture was born which logically should have supplanted the primitive lintel-architecture, of which the civilized style of Greece was the last development. Architecture was become organic; henceforth no academical period was possible to it, nothing but death could stop its growth.



THE first expression of this freedom is called Byzantine Art, and there is nothing to object to in the name. For centuries Byzantium was the centre of it, & its first great work in that city (the Church of the Holy Wisdom, built by Justinian in the year 540) remains its greatest work. The style leaps into sudden completeness in this most lovely building: for there are few works extant of much importance of earlier date. As to its origin, of course buildings were raised all through the sickness of classical art, & traditional forms & ways of work were still in use, & these traditions, which by this time included the forms of

Roman building, were now in the hands of the Greeks. This Romano-Greek building in Greek hands met with traditions drawn from many sources. In Syria, the borderland of so many races & customs, the East mingled with the West, and Byzantine art was born. Its characteristics are simplicity of structure and outline of mass ; amazing delicacy of ornament combined with abhorrence of vagueness : it is bright and clear in colour, pure in line, hating barrenness as much as vagueness ; redundant, but not florid, the very opposite of Roman architecture in spirit, though it took so many of its forms & revivified them. Nothing more beautiful than its best works

Its character

The
spread of
the new
Art

has ever been produced by man, but in spite of its stately loveliness and quietude, it was the mother of fierce vigour in the days to come, for from its first days in St. Sophia, Gothic architecture has still one thousand years of life before it. East and West it overran the world wherever men built with history behind them. In the East it mingled with the traditions of the native populations, especially with Persia of the Sassanian period, and produced the whole body of what we, very erroneously, call Arab Art (for the Arabs never had any art) from Ispahahan to Granada. In the West it settled itself in the parts of Italy that Justinian had conquered, notably Ra-

The na-
tional
styles

venna, and thence came to Venice. From Italy, or perhaps even from Byzantium itself, it was carried into Germany & pre-Norman England, touching even Ireland & Scandinavia. Rome adopted it, and sent it another road through the south of France, where it fell under the influence of provincial Roman architecture, & produced a very strong orderly and logical substyle, just what one imagines the ancient Romans might have built, if they had been able to resist the conquered Greeks who took them captive. Thence it spread all over France, the first development of the architecture of the most architectural of peoples, and in the north of that country fell

Nor-
man
work

under the influence of the Scandinavian and Teutonic tribes, & produced the last of the round arched Gothic styles, (named by us Norman) which those energetic warriors carried into Sicily, where it mingled with the Saracenic Byzantine and produced lovely works. But we know it best in our own country; for Duke William's intrusive monks used it everywhere, and it drove out the native English style derived from Byzantium through Germany.



ERE on the verge of a new change, a change of form important enough (though not a change of essence), we may pause to consider

once more what its essential qualities were. It was the first style since the invention of the arch that did due honour to it, and instead of concealing it decorated it in a logical manner. This was much; but the complete freedom that it had won, which indeed was the source of its ingenuousness, was more. It had shaken off the fetters of Greek superstition & aristocracy, and Roman pedantry, and though it must needs have had laws to be a style at all, it followed them of free will, and yet unconsciously. The cant of the beauty of simplicity (i.e., bareness and barrenness) did not afflict it: it was not ashamed of redundancy of material, or super-

Gothic
freedom

Gothic
handi-
ness

abundance of ornament, any more than nature is  Slim elegance it could produce, or sturdy solidity, as its moods went. Material was not its master, but its servant: marble was not necessary to its beauty; stone would do, or brick, or timber. In default of carving it would set together cubes of glass or whatsoever was shining and fair-hued, & cover every portion of its interiors with a fairy coat of splendour; or would mould mere plaster into intricacy of work scarce to be followed, but never wearying the eyes with its delicacy and expressiveness of line. Smoothness it loves, the utmost finish that the hand can give; but if material or skill fail, the rougher

work shall so be wrought that it also shall please us with its inventive suggestion. For the iron rule of the classical period, the acknowledged slavery of every one but the great man, was gone, and freedom had taken its place: but harmonious freedom. Subordination there is, but subordination of effect, not uniformity of detail; true & necessary subordination, not pedantic.

HE full measure of this freedom Gothic Architecture did not gain until it was in the hands of the workmen of Europe, the gildsmen of the Free Cities, who on many a bloody field proved how dearly they valued their corporate life by the

Free sub-
ordina-
tion

The West
goes East-
ward

generous valour with which they risked their individual lives in its defence. But from the first, the tendency was towards this freedom of hand and mind subordinated to the co-operative harmony which made the freedom possible. That is the spirit of Gothic Architecture.



ET us go on awhile with our history : Up to this point the progress had always been from East to West, i.e., the East carried the West with it; the West must now go to the East to fetch new gain thence. A revival of religion was one of the moving causes of energy in the early Middle Ages in Europe, and this religion (with its enthu-

siasm for visible tokens of the objects of worship) impelled people to visit the East, which held the centre of that worship. Thence arose the warlike pilgrimages of the Crusades amongst races by no means prepared to turn their cheeks to the smiter. True it is that the tendency of the extreme West to seek East did not begin with the days just before the Crusades. There was a thin stream of pilgrims setting eastward long before, and the Scandinavians had found their way to Byzantium, not as pilgrims but as soldiers, and under the name of Vœrings a body-guard of their blood upheld the throne of the Greek Kaiser, and many of them,

**Pointed
Gothic**

returning home, bore with them ideas of art which were not lost on their scanty but energetic populations. But the crusades brought gain from the East in a far more wholesale manner; and I think it is clear that part of that gain was the idea of art that brought about the change from round-arched to pointed Gothic. In those days (perhaps in ours also) it was the rule for conquerors settling in any country to assume that there could be no other system of society save that into which they had been born; and accordingly conquered Syria received a due feudal government, with the King of Jerusalem for Suzerain, the one person allowed

The
Crusa-
ders

by the heralds to bear metal on metal in his coat-armour. Nevertheless, the Westerners who settled in this new realm, few in number as they were, readily received impressions from the art which they saw around them, the Saracenic Byzantine Art, which was, after all, sympathetic with their own minds: & these impressions produced the change. For it is not to be thought that there was any direct borrowing of forms from the East in the gradual change from the round-arched to the pointed Gothic: there was nothing more obvious at work than the influence of a kindred style, whose superior lightness and elegance gave a hint of the road which development might take.

The new
style



ERTAINLY this change in form, when it came, was a startling one: the pointed-arched Gothic when it had grown out of its brief & most beautiful transition, was a vigorous youth indeed. It carried combined strength & elegance almost as far as it could be carried: indeed, sometimes one might think it overdid the lightness of effect, as e.g., in the interior of Salisbury Cathedral. If some abbot or monk of the eleventh century could have been brought back to his rebuilt church of the thirteenth, he might almost have thought that some miracle had taken place: the huge cylindrical or square piers trans-

formed into clusters of slim, elegant shafts; the narrow round-headed windows supplanted by tall wide lancets showing the germs of the elaborate traceries of the next century, & elegantly glazed with pattern and subject. The bold vault spanning the wide nave instead of the flat wooden ceiling of past days; the extreme richness of the mouldings with which every member is treated; the elegance and order of the floral sculpture, the grace and good drawing of the imagery: in short, a complete and logical style with no longer anything to apologise for, claiming homage from the intellect, as well as the imagination of men; the developed Gothic Ar-

A start-
ling
change

Social changes

chitecture which has shaken off the trammels of Byzantium as well as of Rome, but which has, nevertheless, reached its glorious position step by step with no break and no conscious effort after novelty from the wall of Tiryns & the Treasury of Mycenæ.



HIS point of development was attained amidst a period of social conflict, the facts and tendencies of which, ignored by the historians of the eighteenth century, have been laid open to our view by our modern school of evolutionary historians. In the twelfth century the actual handicraftsmen found themselves at last face to face

with the development of the earlier associations of freemen which were the survivals from the tribal society of Europe : in the teeth of these exclusive and aristocratic municipalities the handicraftsmen had associated themselves into guilds of craft, and were claiming their freedom from legal and arbitrary oppression, and a share in the government of the towns ; by the end of the thirteenth century they had conquered the position everywhere & within the next fifty or sixty years the governors of the free towns were the delegates of the craft guilds, and all handicraft was included in their associations. This period of their triumph, marked amidst other

The
craft
gilds

The
zenith

events by the Battle of Courtray, where the chivalry of France turned their backs in flight before the Flemish weavers, was the period during which Gothic Architecture reached its zenith. It must be admitted, I think, that during this epoch, as far as the art of beautiful building is concerned, France & England were the architectural countries par excellence; but all over the intelligent world was spread this bright, glittering, joyous art, which had now reached its acme of elegance and beauty; and moreover in its furniture, of which I have spoken above, the excellence was shared in various measure betwixt the countries of Europe. And let me note

in passing that the necessarily ordinary conception of a Gothic interior as being a colourless whitey-grey place dependent on nothing but the architectural forms, is about as far from the fact as the corresponding idea of a Greek temple standing in all the chastity of white marble. We must remember, on the contrary, that both buildings were clad, and that the noblest part of their raiment was their share of a great epic, a story appealing to the hearts and minds of men. And in the Gothic building, especially in the half century we now have before us, every part of it, walls, windows, floor, was all looked on as space for the representation of incidents of the

The Gothic garments

The lite-
rary fur-
niture

great story of mankind, as it had presented itself to the minds of men then living; & this space was used with the greatest frankness of prodigality, & one may fairly say that wherever a picture could be painted there it was painted.

POR now Gothic Architecture had completed its furniture: Dante, Chaucer, Petrarch; the German hero ballad-epics, the French Romances, the English Forest-ballads, that epic of revolt, as it has been called, the Icelandic Sagas, Froissart and the Chroniclers, represent its literature. Its painting embraces a host of names (of Italy & Flanders chiefly), the two great

realists Giotto and Van Eyk at House-
their head: but every village has its holdfur-
painter, its carvers, its actors even; niture
every man who produces works
of handicraft is an artist. The few
pieces of household goods left of its
wreckage are marvels of beauty; its
woven cloths and embroideries are
worthy of its loveliest building,
its pictured and ornamented books
would be enough in themselves to
make a great period of art, so ex-
cellent as they are in epic intention,
in completeness of unerring deco-
ration, and in marvellous skill of
hand. In short, those masterpieces
of noble building, those specimens
of architecture, as we call them, the
sight of which makes the holiday

The
crest of
the hill

of our lives to-day, are the standard of the whole art of those times, and tell the story of all the completeness of art in the heyday of life, as well as that of the sad story which follows. For when anything human has arrived at quasi-completion there remains for it decay and death, in order that the new thing may be born from it: and this wonderful, joyous art of the Middle-ages could by no means escape its fate.

N the middle of the fourteenth century Europe was scourged by that mysterious terror the Black Death (a similar terror to which perhaps waylays the modern world) and, along with it, the

no less mysterious pests of Commercialism & Bureaucracy attacked us. This misfortune was the turning-point of the Middle Ages; once again a great change was at hand.

Beyond
the crest



HE birth & growth of the coming change was marked by art with all fidelity. Gothic Architecture began to alter its character in the years that immediately followed on the Great Pest; it began to lose its exaltation of style & to suffer a diminution in the generous wealth of beauty which it gave us in its heyday. In some places, e.g., England, it grew more crab-

**First
years
of the
change**

bed, & even sometimes more common-place; in others, as in France, it lost order, virility, and purity of line. But for a long time yet it was alive and vigorous, & showed even greater capacity than before for adapting itself to the needs of a developing society: nor did the change of style affect all its furniture injuriously; some of the subsidiary arts as, e.g., Flemish tapestry & English wood-carving, rather gained than lost for many years.

Tlast, with the close of the Fifteenth century, the Great Change became obvious; & we must remember that it was no superficial change of form, but a change of

spirit affecting every form inevitably. This change we have somewhat boastfully, and as regards the arts quite untruthfully, called the New Birth. But let us see what it means.

A new Society

OCIETY was preparing for a complete recasting of its elements: the Mediæval Society of Status was in process of transition into the modern Society of Contract. New classes were being formed to fit the new system of production which was at the bottom of this; political life began again with the new birth of bureaucracy; & political, as distinguished from natural, nationalities, were being hammered

The
rational
side of the
change

ed together for the use of that bureaucracy, which was itself a necessity to the new system. And withal a new religion was being fashioned to fit the new theory of life: in short, the Age of Commercialism was being born.

DOW some of us think that all this was a source of misery & degradation to the world at the time, that it is still causing misery and degradation, and that as a system it is bound to give place to a better one. Yet we admit that it had a beneficent function to perform; that amidst all the ugliness & confusion which it brought with it, it was a necessary instrument for the develop-

ment of freedom of thought and
the capacities of man; for the sub-
jugation of nature to his material
needs. This Great Change, I say,
was necessary and inevitable, and
on this side, the side of commerce
and commercial science and poli-
tics, was a genuine new birth. On
this side it did not look backward
but forward: there had been nothing
like it in past history; it was found-
ed on no pedantic model; necessity,
not whim, was its craftsman.

The ir-
rational
side

BUT, strange to say, to
this living body of social,
political, religious, scienti-
fic New Birth was bound
the dead corpse of a past art. On
every other side it bade men look

The past
slays the
present

forward to some change or other, were it good or bad: on the side of art, with the sternest pedagogic utterance, it bade men look backward across the days of the "Fathers and famous men that begat them," and in scorn of them, to an art that had been dead a thousand years before. Hitherto from the very beginning the past was past, all of it that was not alive in the present, unconsciously to the men of the present. Henceforth the past was to be our present, and the blankness of its dead wall was to shut out the future from us. There are many artists at present who do not sufficiently estimate the enormity, the portentousness of this change, and

how closely it is connected with
the Victorian Architecture of the
brick box and the slate lid, which
helps to make us the dullards that
we are. How on earth could peo-
ple's ideas of beauty change so?
you may say. Well, was it their
ideas of beauty that changed? Was
it not rather that beauty, however
unconsciously, was no longer an
object of attainment with the men
of that epoch?

Beauty
lost

 HIS used once to puzzle
me in the presence of one
of the so-called master-
pieces of the New Birth,
the revived classical style, such a
building as St. Paul's in London,
for example. I have found it diffi-

A strange cult to put myself in the frame of
story ^{too} mind which could accept such a
work as a substitute for even the
latest and worst Gothic building.
Such taste seemed to me like the
taste of a man who should prefer
his lady-love bald  But now
I know that it was not a matter
of choice on the part of any one
then alive who had an eye for beau-
ty: if the change had been made on
the grounds of beauty it would be
wholly inexplicable; but it was not
so. In the early days of the Renais-
sance there were artists possessed
of the highest qualities; but those
great men (whose greatness, mind
you, was only in work not carried
out by co-operation, painting and

sculpture for the most part) were
really but the fruit of the blossom-
ing-time, the Gothic period; as was
abundantly proved by the succeed-
ing periods of the Renaissance,
which produced nothing but in-
anity and plausibility in all the
arts,  A few individual artists
were great truly; but artists were
no longer the masters of art, be-
cause the people had ceased to be
artists: its masters were pedants.
St. Peter's in Rome, St. Paul's in
London, were not built to be beau-
tiful, or to be beautiful and conve-
nient. They were not built to be
homes of the citizens in their mo-
ments of exaltation, their supreme
grief or supreme hope, but to be

Pedants
rule art

Donnish
buildings

proper, respectable, and therefore to show the due amount of cultivation, and knowledge of the only peoples & times that in the minds of their ignorant builders were not ignorant barbarians. They were built to be the homes of a decent unenthusiastic ecclesiasticism, of those whom we sometimes call Dons now-a-days. Beauty and romance were outside the aspirations of their builders. Nor could it have been otherwise in those days; for, once again, architectural beauty is the result of the harmonious and intelligent co-operation of the whole body of people engaged in producing the work of the workman; and by the time that the changeling

New Birth was grown to be a vigorous imp, such workmen no longer existed. By that time Europe had begun to transform the great army of artist-craftsmen, who had produced the beauty of her cities, her churches, manor-houses & cottages, into an enormous stock of human machines, who had little chance of earning a bare livelihood if they lingered over their toil to think of what they were doing: who were not asked to think, paid to think, or allowed to think. That invention we have, I should hope, about perfected by this time, and it must soon give place to a new one. Which is happy; for as long as the invention is in use you need not

The
crafts-
men
turned
into ma-
chines

What
can we
do?

trouble yourselves about architecture, since you will not get it, as the common expression of our life, that is as a genuine thing.



UT at present I am not going to say anything about direct remedies for the miseries of the New Birth; I can only tell you what you ought to do if you can. I want you to see that from the brief historic review of the progress of the Arts it results that to-day there is only one style of Architecture on which it is possible to found a true living art, which is free to adapt itself to the varying conditions of social life, climate, and so forth, and that that style is Gothic architec-

What
was the
Greek
Temple

ture. The greater part of what we now call architecture is but an imitation of an imitation of an imitation, the result of a tradition of dull respectability, or of foolish whims without root or growth in them.

 ET us look at an instance of pedantic retrospection employed in the service of art. A Greek columnar temple when it was a real thing, was a kind of holy railing built round a shrine: these things the people of that day wanted, & they naturally took the form of a Greek Temple under the climate of Greece & given the mood of its people. But do we want those things? If so, I should like to know what for. And

**Do we
want it?**

if we pretend we do and so force a Greek Temple on a modern city, we produce such a gross piece of ugly absurdity as you may see spanning the Lochs at Edinburgh. In these islands we want a roof and walls with windows cut in them; & these things a Greek Temple does not pretend to give us.

CILL a Roman building allow us to have these necessaries? Well, only on the terms that we are to be ashamed of wall, roof, & windows, & pretend that we haven't got either of them, but rather a whimsical attempt at the imitation of a Greek Temple.

GILL neo-classical building allow us these necessities? Pretty much **a Gothic building?**

on the same terms as
the Roman one; except when it is
rather more than half Gothic. It
will force us to pretend that we have
neither roof, walls, nor windows,
nothing but an imitation of the Ro-
man travesty of a Greek Temple.

QOW a Gothic building
has walls that it is not a-
shamed of; and in those
walls you may cut win-
dows wherever you please; &, if you
please may decorate them to show
that you are not ashamed of them;
your windows, which you must
have, become one of the great beau-

The
glory of
wall and
roof

ties of your house, and you have no longer to make a lesion in logic in order not to sit in pitchy darkness in your own house, as in the sham sham-Roman style; your window, I say, is no longer a concession to human weakness, an ugly necessity (generally ugly enough in all conscience) but a glory of the art of Building. As for the roof in the sham style: unless the building is infected with Gothic common sense, you must pretend that you are living in a hot country which needs nothing but an awning, and that it never rains or snows in these islands. Whereas in a Gothic building the roof both within and without (especially within, as is most

Building
and cli-
mate

meet) is the crown of its beauties,
the abiding place of its brain.

AGAIN, consider the exterior of our buildings, that part of them that is common to all passers-by, and that no man can turn into private property unless he builds amidst an inaccessible park. The original of our neo-classic architecture was designed for marble in a bright dry climate, which only weathers it to a golden tone. Do we really like a neo-classic building weather-beaten by the roughness of hundreds of English winters from October to June? And on the other hand, can any of us fail to be touched by the weathered sur-

The
beauty
of age

face of a Gothic building which has escaped the restorers' hands? Do we not clearly know the latter to be a piece of nature, that more excellent mood of nature that uses the hands and wills of men as instruments of creation?

INDEED time would fail me to go into the many sides of the contrast between the Architecture which is a mere pedantic imitation of what was once alive, and that which after a development of long centuries has still in it, as I think, capacities for fresh developments, since its life was cut short by an arbitrary recurrence to a style which had long lost

The new
style

all elements of life and growth.
Once for all, then, when the modern world finds that the eclecticism of the present is barren and fruitless, and that it needs and will have a style of architecture which, I must tell you once more, can only be as part of a change as wide and deep as that which destroyed Feudalism ; when it has come to that conclusion, the style of architecture will have to be historic in the true sense ; it will not be able to dispense with tradition ; it cannot begin at least with doing something quite different from anything that has been done before ; yet whatever the form of it may be, the spirit of it will be sympathy with the

The
founda-
tion

needs and aspirations of its own time, not simulation of needs & aspirations passed away. Thus it will remember the history of the past, make history in the present, and teach history in the future. As to the form of it, I see nothing for it but that the form, as well as the spirit, must be Gothic ; an organic style cannot spring out of an eclectic one, but only from an organic one. In the future, therefore, our style of architecture must be Gothic Architecture.



ND meanwhile of the world demanding architecture, what are we to do ? Meanwhile ? After all, is there any meanwhile ? Are we

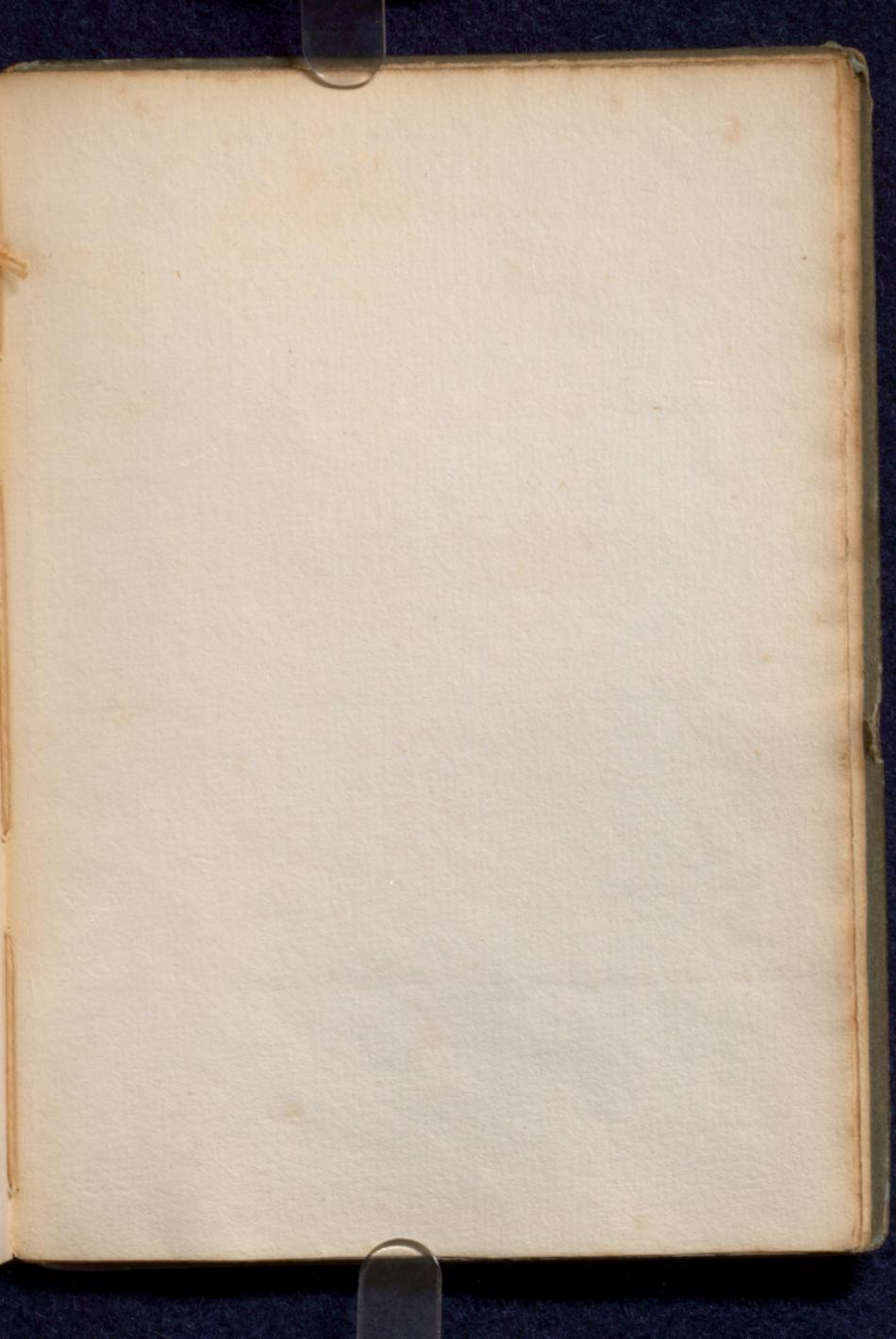
not now demanding Gothic Architecture and crying for the fresh New Birth?  To me it seems so. It is true that the world is uglier now than it was fifty years ago; but then people thought that ugliness a desirable thing, and looked at it with complacency as a sign of civilisation, which no doubt it is. Now we are no longer complacent, but are grumbling in a dim unorganised manner. We feel a loss, and unless we are very unreal and helpless we shall presently begin to try to supply that loss.  Art cannot be dead so long as we feel the lack of it, I say: and though we shall probably try many roundabout ways for filling up the lack; yet we shall

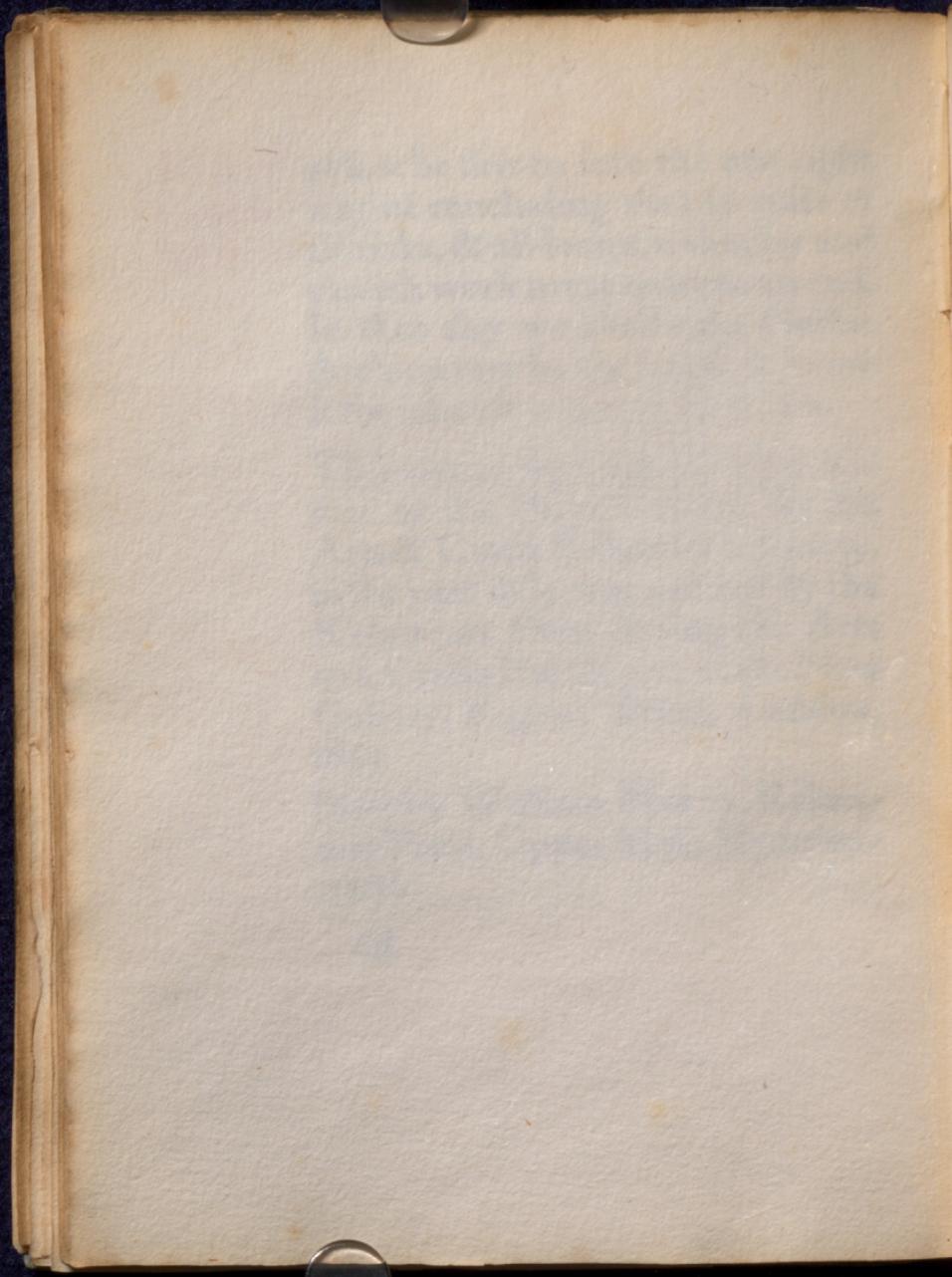
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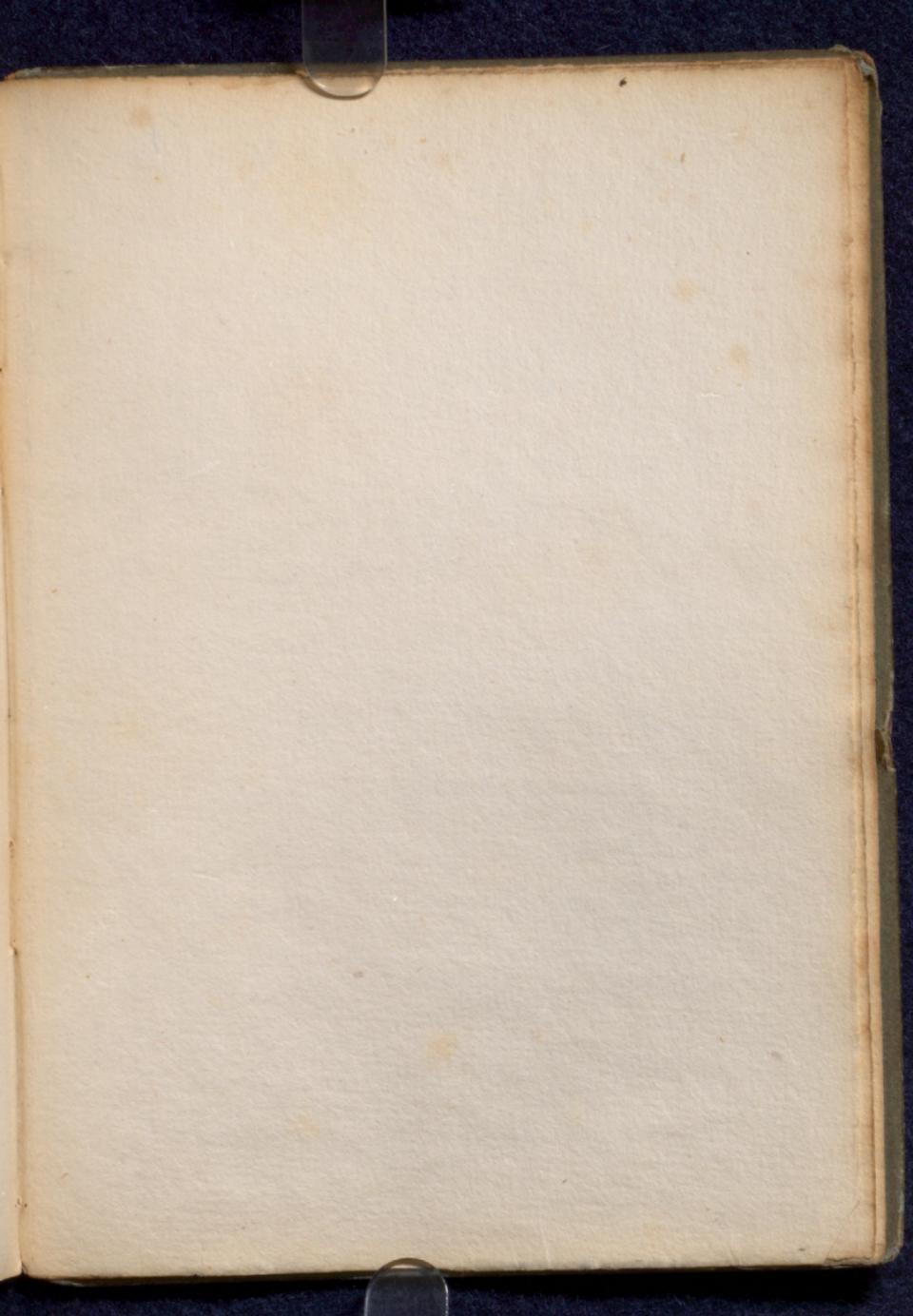
**End of
slavish
work** at last be driven into the one right way of concluding that in spite of all risks, & all losses, unhappy and slavish work must come to an end. In that day we shall take Gothic Architecture by the hand, & know it for what it was and what it is.

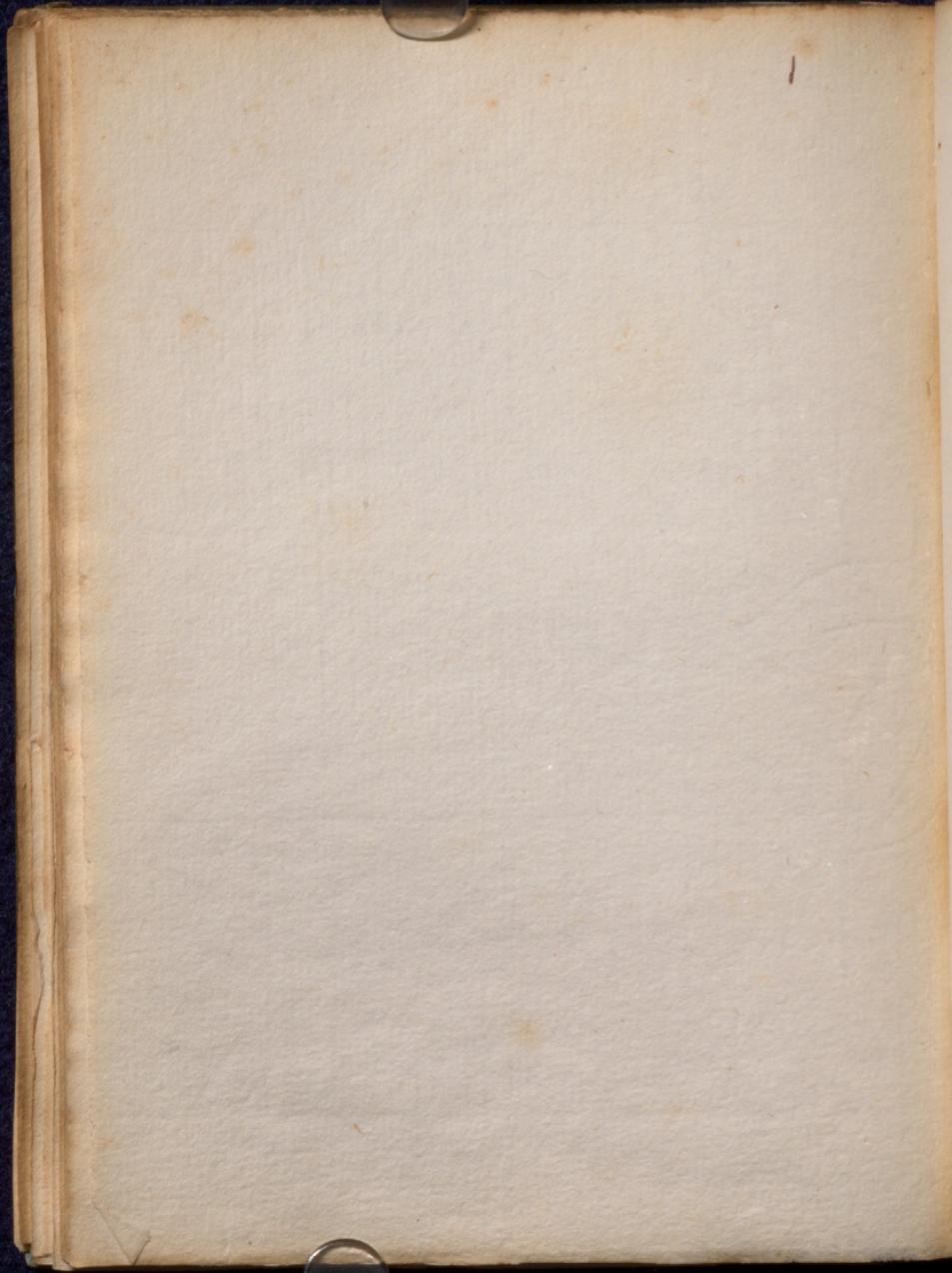
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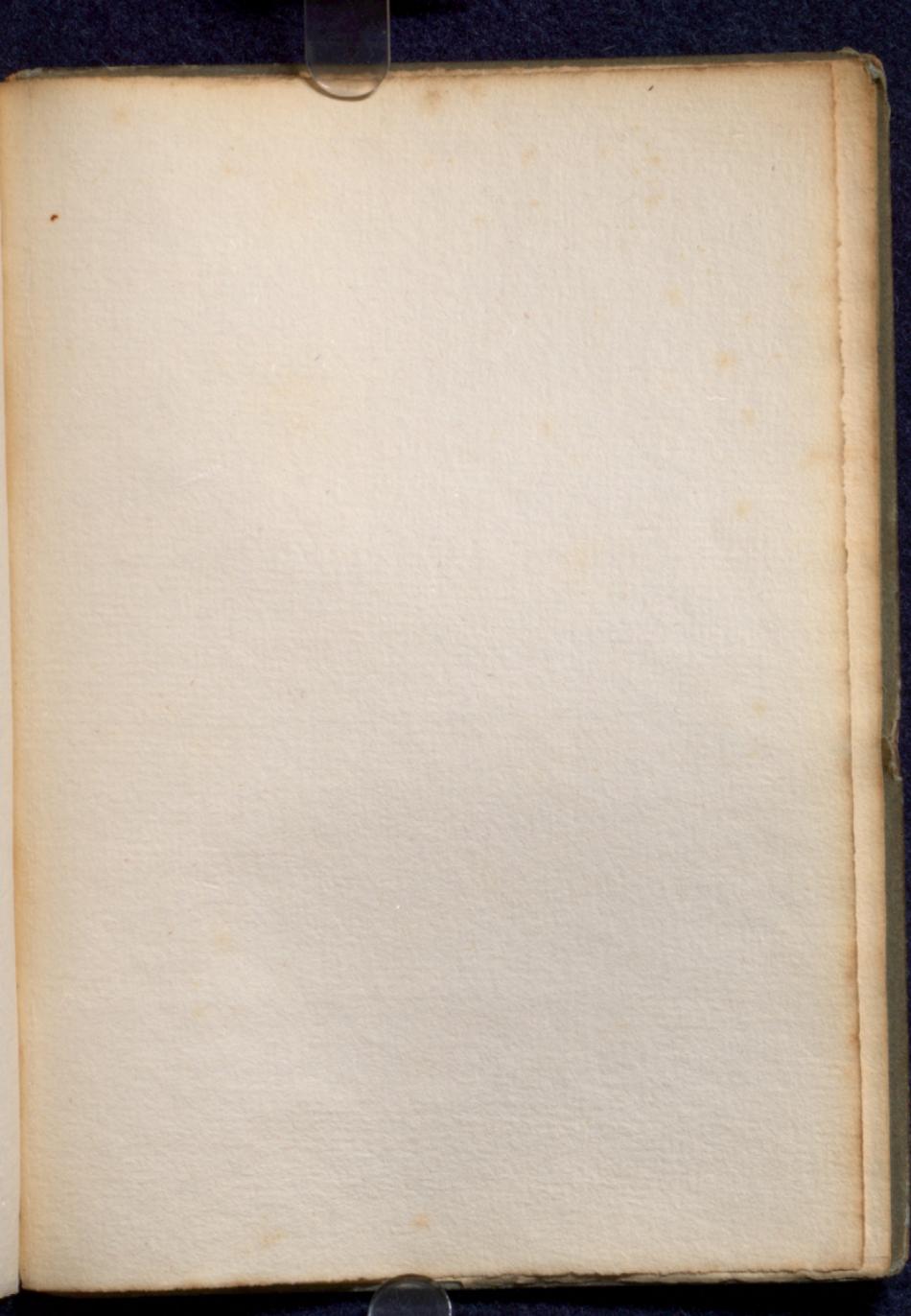
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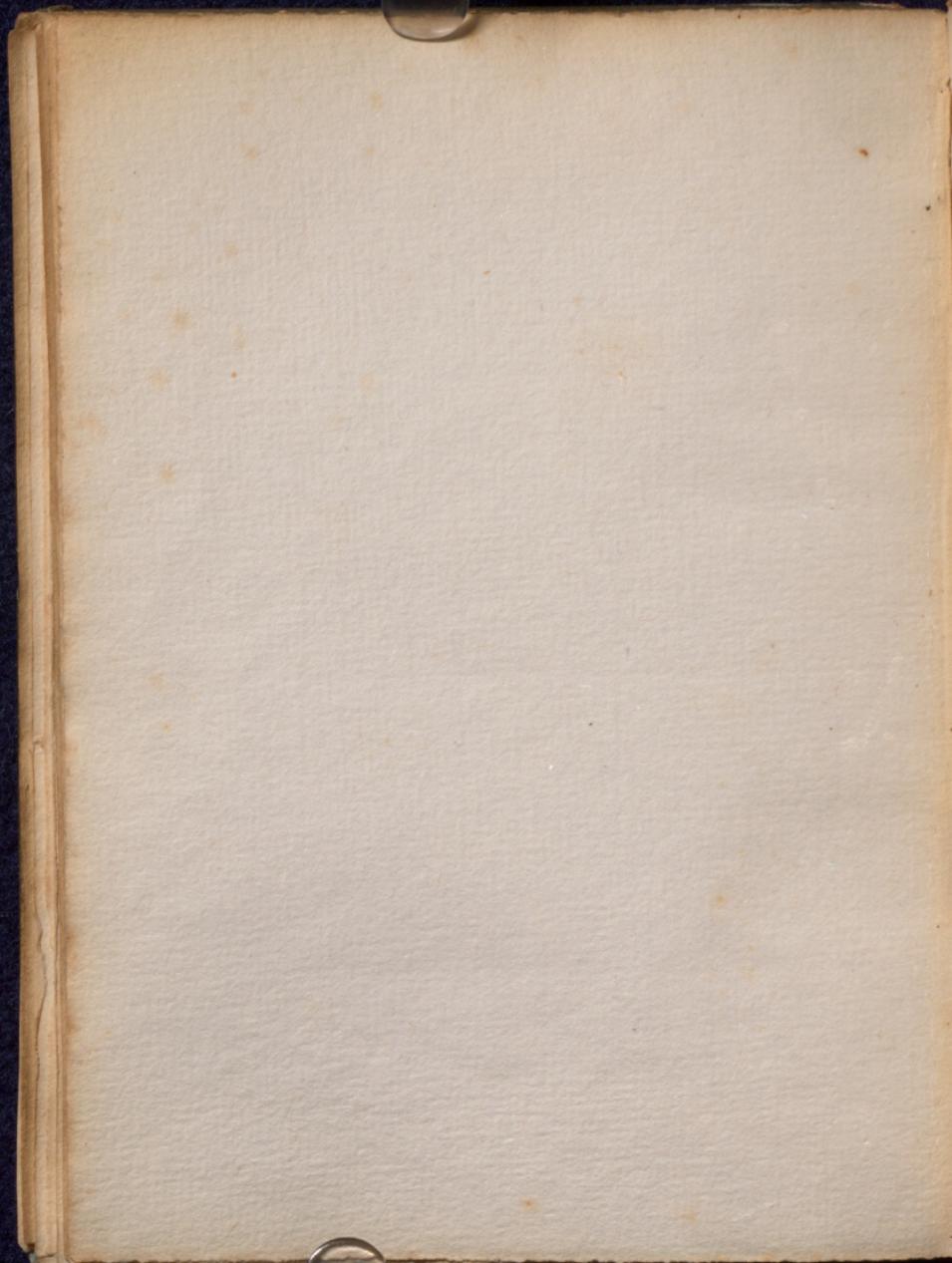












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